

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM OF THE SOVIET UNION

Its Background and Its Meaning

SOLOMON M. SCHWARZ

EVEN among the severest critics of the Soviet Union, it was until recently acknowledged that the "new" Russia had wiped out anti-Semitism: and Soviet sympathizers cited this achievement as an offset to charges that the whole Russian people had suffered loss of civil rights. So long as a Jew was not discriminated against as Jew, so long as he shared the civil depri-

PERHAPS the only statement about the USSR that Americans—whether hostile or friendly—have been able to agree on is that "at least you can't deny that the Soviets put an end to anti-Semitism." In the face of recent plain evidence to the contrary, public opinion has gone from incredulity to bewilderment and confusion. Answering the questions "how much?" "what kind?" and "why at this time?" is ringed around with great difficulties: in Russia, no organizations exist either to study, seek out, or report anti-Semitism; no public opinion poll asks questions about it; and the observers who might be able to evaluate such a phenomenon are not allowed to enter and freely travel about the country. On the other hand there is a vast mass of relevant published material in Russian, which can be supplemented with the reports of individuals who have left Russia and other evidence. After study of such sources, SOLOMON M. SCHWARZ has endeavored to appraise the present wave of anti-Semitism in the USSR, to give its historical background, and to speculate on its causes. Dr. Schwarz is one of the recognized authorities on Russian political and economic history; he is the co-author of the standard work, *Management in Soviet Russian Industry and Agriculture*, and of many other important works on Soviet Russia in German, French, and Russian. He has recently completed a large book on Russian trade unions and labor, and is at work on a study on Russian nationalities policy. He was born in Russia in 1883, studied at many universities in Russia and Germany, was expelled from Russia in 1922, and came to this country in 1940. Nathan Glick collaborated with Dr. Schwarz in the preparation of the article.

vations of all citizens, that somehow was supposed to represent a net gain.

Even when it became clear that the "liquidations" following the Moscow trials of 1936-38 had struck a disproportionate number of highly placed Jews, most observers were quite ready to dismiss this as pure coincidence. The existence of any widespread popular anti-Semitism, much less of any official policy of anti-Semitism in the USSR, was rejected as unthinkable in the light of official pronouncements and presumed practice. The reports of anti-Semitic incidents that sometimes appeared in the press were interpreted to mean that whatever anti-Semitism did exist was inherited from Czarist Russia and confined to particularly backward groups, and had not yet withered away under the novel social conditions of Soviet Russia; there was no question but that anti-Semitic opinions would, with the passage of time, finally disappear under the operations of Soviet rule. Thus, it was inevitable that the current and continuing purge of Jewish intellectuals in the Soviet Union, with its strong anti-Semitic flavor, should have taken the world by surprise. In view of the thoroughness of this purge thirty years after the revolution, even the most sanguine can hardly avoid being shaken in their earlier beliefs that Russian anti-Semitism has been obliterated, or is in its death-bed stages.

WITHOUT warning or excuse, the leading Yiddish newspaper in the Soviet Union, *Einikeit*, was suspended after its issue of November 20, 1948. In the Ukraine, another Yiddish periodical, *Der Shtern*, was suspended for "serious manifestations of Jewish bourgeois nationalism," by which is evidently meant Zionism. "Emes," the Yiddish publishing house, has been closed and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow dissolved. The six outstanding Yiddish writers—Pfeffer, Markish, Mistor, Halkin, Broderzon, and Bergelson—have been reported

arrested, with no denial forthcoming from any Soviet source. The campaign against "homeless cosmopolitans" has marked Jews for its special victims: by printing their original Jewish names after their adopted Russian names, something which is never done in the case of non-Jews like Molotov (Scriabin) or Stalin (Djugashvili); and by such pointed remarks as that of the secretary of the Byelorussian Communist party, on February 17 of this year: "Only one theater in the Byelorussian Republics—a Jewish one—puts on unpatriotic plays in which life in America is praised."

The unexpectedness of this rapid succession of apparently anti-Semitic moves has caused commentators to improvise hasty explanations. The most popular of these is that Jews are, by cultural and familial ties, internationalist in outlook and therefore do not fit very snugly into the recent wave of officially fostered Russian nationalism. Another school of thought holds that the setting up of a Jewish state in Palestine has reawakened outlawed Zionist sympathies in the Jews of Russia proper as well as in the annexed sectors of Poland. Both of these explanations are pertinent, but they do not get to the heart of Soviet anti-Semitism. Even to begin to understand what is happening, it is necessary to recognize that anti-Semitism, far from having vanished from Russia with the Romanovs as is commonly supposed, has been substantially present in Soviet Russia during the last thirty years, in different forms and intensity during different phases of Soviet Russia's evolution. Far more significant and more ominous is the prospect that this latest phase may represent a new stage, that the anti-Semitism of today is not merely more intense than in recent years, but more official, and more seriously political in character.

UNDER the Czars anti-Semitism took root unevenly. The government's anti-Jewish policy was aimed at restricting Jews to an extended ghetto, the "Jewish Pale," which in the main consisted of peripheral regions inhabited by national minority groups: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, the Ukraine, White Russia. In the Russian provinces proper, the population at large was out of contact with Jews in everyday life and did not experience a "Jewish problem." What anti-Semitism

there was visibly carried the Czarist government seal and was in the service of a divide-and-rule policy. As the official creed, it permeated the society's aristocratic upper strata, affected various groups in the bureaucracy, and contaminated parts of the urban middle classes. However, for lack of immediate targets, it found little echo among the mass of people. Conditions were different, however, in those parts of the Jewish Pale that had been under Polish rule before the partitioning of Poland in the late 18th century. In these areas, of which the Western Ukraine was the most important, anti-Semitism had sunk deep roots among the peasantry. But even there, acute tension rose to the surface only for brief periods. The pogroms of the 1880's and early 1900's, deliberately launched by the Czarist regime, attracted limited support and this chiefly among the *Lumpenproletariat* of the city.

Compared with the wave of anti-Jewish violence that swept Russia's Southwestern provinces in 1918-1920, the earlier pogroms seem, in retrospect, mere local disturbances. While Czarist anti-Semitism before the Bolshevik revolution had failed to arouse mass response, counter-revolutionary propaganda, using anti-Semitic slogans in the turbulent and terror-haunted period of the civil war, could claim a large measure of success. Pogroms in the cities and villages of the Southern and Southeastern provinces of Russia took between 75,000 and 100,000 Jewish lives between 1918 and 1921, compared with about 1000 Jews killed in the pogroms in the 19th and early 20th centuries. (Forty-seven were killed in the Kishinev pogrom.)

For the new-born Soviet government the fight against anti-Semitism was not only a matter of principle but a necessity dictated by military strategy. In its famous decree of July 27, 1918 the Council of People's Commissars declared that "the anti-Semitic movement and anti-Jewish pogroms are a bane to the cause of the workers' and peasants' revolution," and appealed to "Socialist Russia's laboring people to combat this evil with all means. National enmity weakens our revolutionary ranks, disunites the labor front joined together regardless of nationality, and helps only our enemies." And, indeed, in the days following the close of the civil war, it seemed that the victory of the revolution had initiated equality and dignity for Russian

Jews. At any rate, anti-Semitism was identified as a political weapon of the counter-revolution, which, by 1921, had been definitely defeated and disarmed, and outlawed. Once the Soviet Union was well on its way to a classless society and socialism, it was argued, the "real"—economic—root of anti-Semitism would die for lack of nourishment.

II

BEGINNING with the mid-1920's, however, a new current of anti-Semitism swept through the Soviet Union. It attracted the attention of the Soviet press and gave birth to a considerable body of literature opposing it. Contrary to the claims of official pronouncements, the new anti-Semitism was not a resurgence of traditional pre-revolutionary anti-Semitism; the facts contradict the official theory that the past was being revived in the cities by non-Sovietized newcomers from a traditionalist, reactionary countryside. The source of the new anti-Semitism lay among the dispossessed and de-classed strata of the urban middle classes, and penetrated into the upper strata of industrial workers, the university students, the membership of the Communist Youth, and, last but not least, into the Communist party itself. The anti-Jewish stereotypes that became current among these groups were drawn from a primitive but popular hostility to the social stratification and social hierarchy created by the New Economic Policy (1923-1927), when the legalization of a semblance of private enterprise appeared to many as the harbinger of a returning capitalist society, and "the Jew" impressed himself on the anti-Semitic mind as the "NEP profiteer."

At this time many new workers in industry were recruited from the older middle-class elements, Jews and Gentiles alike. For such elements, almost the only means of social mobility was through the factory and the Communist Youth. At the same time, even while the number of factory workers rose, unemployment was high and rising. In such a situation of intense competition anti-Semitic charges were hurled against the Jews.

One of the first to raise the issue of the rising anti-Semitism was Mikhail I. Kalinin, chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, titular head of the Soviet state, who wrote in July 1926: "There are many letters and written questions ad-

ressed to speakers at public meetings, signed and unsigned, which refer to the Jewish question in general and to the transfer of Jews in the Crimea in particular. Some are clearly reactionary, bigoted, and anti-Semitic; others, like Comrade Ovchinnikov's letter, sincerely endeavor to find out why Jews are befriended by the Soviet government." (*Izvestia*, July 11, 1926.)

Later in the same year, Kalinin pointedly referred to a fertile source of this new anti-Semitic sentiment: "Why is the Russian *intelligentsia* perhaps more anti-Semitic today than it was under Czarism? This is a natural development. In the first days of the revolution the urban Jewish mass of intellectuals and semi-intellectuals threw itself into the channels of the revolution. As a nation oppressed, a nation which never participated in ruling, . . . this mass naturally flocked to the revolutionary construction job, and this is tied up with administration. . . . Just at the time when considerable parts of the Russian *intelligentsia* broke away, frightened of the revolution, just at that time the Jewish *intelligentsia* gushed into the channel of the revolution, filling it to a large percentage in proportion to its numbers, and started working in the revolutionary administrative organs." (First All-Union Convention of OZET in Moscow, November 15 through 20, 1926. Stenographic transcript.)*

*The dominance of the Jews in the Bolshevik apparatus was never more than a myth. From its very beginnings as an organized faction within the Russian Social Democratic movement in the early 1900's, Bolshevism failed to attract mass support among Jewish workers and intellectuals. Reporting on the 1907 convention of the Russian Democratic Workers Party, Joseph Stalin wrote:

"Statistical analysis has shown that among the Menshevik faction [the more moderate group] the majority were Jews, the next larger group Georgians, and the next, Russians. Conversely, the overwhelming majority of the Bolshevik faction were Russians. . . . Commenting on this, one of the Bolsheviks (Comrade Aleksinsky, I think) jestingly said that Mensheviks were a Jewish faction while the Bolsheviks were a truly Russian one, that it thus might be a good idea for us Bolsheviks to start a pogrom within the party." (*Works*, vol. 2, Moscow 1946, pp. 50f.)

The connection between the anti-Semitic jest and the anti-Semitic act is no new phenomenon. The jester himself, Grigory A. Aleksinsky, openly joined up with the anti-Semitic forces during the civil war.

During the 1917-18 revolution, Jewish liberal and left-wing groups proved equally recalcitrant. In

OUTCROPPINGS of anti-Semitism in the middle 1920's became so frequent and violent that the Soviet press was compelled, as mentioned above, to take notice. A Soviet journalist, Mikhail Gorev, discussed the question in a number of articles in *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, the Moscow Young Communist paper, and later embodied reports of anti-Semitic incidents in a book, *Against the Anti-Semites* (1928):

"Comrade Gufeld from Smela (Cherkassy district) relates: 'In 1925-26 I worked in the Smela sugar refinery. Anti-Semitism there was very widespread. It happened that a "Jewboy" greenhorn would be put on the running gear, the carriage made to roll full speed, and then the "Jewboy" would be ordered to jump off the racing wheels. Then another entertainment was invented—"Jewboy" greenhorns would be doused with hot water. Or the fellows would form two lines and, yelling and shouting, would hurl the Jew back and forth between the two lines. When work clothes were to be distributed among the workers the stockkeeper simply announced: "No work clothes for longnosed Hayyims and Hershes, they can go peddle."'"

In a Bryansk plant a gang of young workers, including six Young Communists, harassed a young Jewish worker. At an informal meeting that followed this incident, a party observer wrote: "Party and Komsomol people among the audience kept silent. The

fact, the Bolsheviks, according to the evidence of Samuel Agunsky, were hard put to find enough Jewish writers to start a pro-Soviet newspaper. (*Der Yiddisher Arbeter in der Komunistisher Bewegung*, 1917-1921. White Russian Gosizdat, Minsk, 1925, pp. 5f.)

Even after the Soviet rule had become firmly established, and articulate anti-Soviet opposition in the ranks of the Jewish socialist and labor movement had been eliminated, Jewish participation in the Communist party remained limited. Twice—in 1922 and 1927—national affiliation was counted when the Communist party of the Soviet Union took a membership census. The percentage of Jews among party members and probationers was 5.2 per cent in 1922, and 4.3 per cent in 1927 (*Statistical Materials on Jewish Demography and Economy*, No. 4, Moscow, March 1929, p. 29), while the proportion of Jews in the total Soviet population, in 1926, was 1.8 per cent. But it would be more accurate to compare the percentage of Jewish Communists against the 8.2 per cent proportion of Jews within the urban population, since the Communist party at that time was composed preponderantly of city-dwellers.

secretary of the Komsomol cell behaved as if the cat had got his tongue. The impression obtained that they were in agreement with the anti-Jewish statements." (A. Chemerisskii, in *Communist Revolution* for March 1929).

Violence was frequent: "Lysenko, a young surveying student and member of the Komsomol, abused Sh. just because the latter happened to be the only Jew living in the dormitory. . . . Sh. . . . was . . . kept awake at night, forced to lie in bed with his eyes wide open. To awaken him, they hit him with a rule on the head, doused him with icy water, prodded his bare heels with a pair of compasses. . . . At the same Institute, hoodlums beat up a pregnant Jewish girl student, stamping on her belly with their feet." (Yefim Dobin, *The Truth about Jews*, Leningrad, 1928.)

Again and again it was the Communist Youth who were in the forefront of anti-Semitic campaigns. A Jewish Telegraphic Agency dispatch from Moscow, dated October 21, 1929, reported a demand made at a meeting of Communist students in Kiev for the establishment of a *numerus clausus* for Jewish students entering Soviet universities. Yet anti-Semitism as the concomitant of Soviet industrialization and proletarianization, processes regarded as the most progressive features of all social developments in the Soviet Union, was either too incomprehensible or too embarrassing to be openly discussed by the ruling party. The party leadership preferred to go on blaming "backward elements" for an attitude which the party's own reporters located among the Communist "vanguard" of the younger generation.

THE problem of enforcing the laws against anti-Semitism was complicated not only by the prejudice displayed by party members and Young Communists but by the anti-Jewish attitudes displayed by some local officials and lower-level government agencies, particularly in the Ukraine. Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondents in 1925 were permitted to send out stories of quite a number of incidents that were disclosed by the administration.

A censor-approved dispatch from Moscow, June 20, 1925, stated: "The existence of anti-Semitism on the part of the Soviet administration in small towns mainly populated by

Jews was admitted by a member of the special commission appointed for the purpose of investigating this condition. A Jewish member of this commission writing in *Emes* admits 'anti-Semitism is practiced openly in numerous places.' The writer cites many glaring instances where complaints were made which the district authorities disregarded, or were slow to take action on [after] the [additional] complaints of the commission."

Another dispatch from Moscow, September 4, 1925, reported: "Complaints of mistreatment of the Jewish population in the smaller towns and villages were voiced in various parts of the Soviet Union. Expressions of these complaints are found in almost every issue of the Yiddish Communist press appearing in Soviet Russia. Mistreatment of even Jewish invalids in the government invalid homes [and] terrorization of the Jewish population reached such an extent that, according to a recent issue of *Der Shtern*, Jewish Communist paper in Kharkov, when three members of Kiev militia were arrested for frequent mistreatment, abuse and acts of terror, no one was willing to testify against them for fear of revenge."

Shortly afterwards, on October 19, 1925, a JTA cable from Kharkov reported "open charges against local Communist authorities of violating the Soviet law in their attitude toward the Jewish population." Instances of discrimination in the allocation of apartment space, in tax assessment, even in government employment agencies, became more and more numerous. "When personnel was reduced and efficiency measures were introduced in the organization," wrote one Soviet journalist, "Jewish employees were more often discharged and met with considerably greater difficulties in finding new jobs than was the case for employees who were Ukrainians, Great-Russians, etc." (G. Ledat, *Anti-Semitism and Antisemites*, Leningrad, 1929, p. 52.)

The epidemic spread and assumed such menacing proportions that the subject had to be treated in a *Pravda* editorial on February 19, 1929 (the first and, so far as can be ascertained, the sole editorial ever to have dealt with anti-Semitism). Under the title, "Heed the Fight against Anti-Semitism," *Pravda* said: "More and more frequently reports on manifestations of anti-Semitism find

reflection in the press. . . . When plants where anti-Semitic acts occurred are being investigated we are invariably faced with the one dangerous fact that there is connivance on the part of the local party, trade union, and Komsomol organizations; this alone makes it possible for the anti-Semitic persecution campaign to go on unpunished for months and years. The tortured worker finds no protection; anti-Semitic slang becomes current in the shops; and the officers of the cells, work councils, Komsomol prefer not to 'meddle' in an unpleasant business, prefer not to start 'trouble,' etc."

III

IN THE 1920's anti-Semitism, as we have seen, spread with the disintegration of the old urban society, whose dispossessed strata carried it through their younger generation into the industrial plants, where large groups of new industrial workers were easily swayed against the "Jewish intruder." Unemployment was at that time still substantial, and anti-Semitic sentiment, stimulated by competition for jobs, was fanned. Yet throughout there was no ambiguity in the government's attitude.

The rather sudden decrease of anti-Semitic incidents, as reported in the Soviet press after 1930, was, however, less the achievement of direct government action than the product of an abrupt change in the social and economic climate. With the inauguration of the first Five Year Plan, the comparatively mixed and flexible economy of the NEP was uprooted and a one-track society violently established in its place. Economic planning embraced every aspect of Soviet life, which was now subordinated to one supreme law: the speed-up. As industrialization and collectivization swept the country millions of new jobs were created, thereby calming the economic fears of the anti-Semite. The hostility directed against Jews competing for the better jobs when such jobs were few gave way to rivalry for high output as a means of obtaining the highest wage premiums and social privileges.

Changes in the economic climate were paralleled by a conspicuous change in the nation's social pattern, which also removed some of the stimuli for anti-Semitic reactions. Under the NEP Jews had been numerous among "NEPmen," the peculiar new bourgeoisie which had flourished during that

period, and, in addition, had been strongly represented in many small-trade fields. Although the number of Jewish small tradesmen was many times the number of Jewish NEPmen speculators, the attitude displayed by substantial sectors of the population towards small Jewish tradesmen had been largely determined by their hostile reactions to the big NEP profiteers: the dialectics of anti-Semitism transformed "the Jew" into a speculator and NEP tycoon by definition. Anti-NEP trends visibly tinged the anti-Semitic leanings of urban workers, of university students, and especially of large groups of Young Communists reared according to rather primitive notions of social classes and the class struggle.

With the inauguration of the Five Year Plan all the NEPmen were mercilessly eliminated; quite a number of them were physically "liquidated," and the entire social group disappeared from the Soviet scene. Private small trade, though it was not abolished, lost the odium of speculative profiteering, not merely because no NEPmen were left to make all private trading look highly suspect and "capitalistic," but also because ever more rigid controls and the all-pervasiveness of central planning severely restricted the possibilities of commercial speculation. This development undermined one of the deepest sources of mass anti-Semitism as it had crystallized in the 1920's.

Finally, one might point to another factor leading to the decline of the anti-Semitism of the 20's. As vast numbers of workers were swept into industry, the "newcomers" were no longer identified as Jews alone. The ethnic composition of the Soviet labor force changed as members of national groups very different from the Russians began to make up a sizable proportion of it. Conflicts in industry of the sort we have described were no longer between Russians and Jews alone: such anti-Semitic incidents, to which references can still be found in the early 30's were submerged in a flood of cases of "great-power chauvinism" in industry involving other national groups.

THE curve of anti-Semitism dropped to its lowest point in the middle of the 1930's. This point was not, however, zero. Anti-Semitic feeling still was present in a mute, subdued form, occasionally exploding in in-

dividual anti-Jewish aggression.* But it was no longer conspicuous as a surface phenomenon nor did it demand as much public attention as it had in the late 1920's. In 1935 and 1936 the Soviet ruling groups manifested a greater willingness than before to attack anti-Semitism openly and to give this more firmly expressed attitude deliberate publicity. The shift in emphasis was due to considerations of both foreign and domestic policy.

In foreign policy the essential motivation grew from the fact that relations with Nazi Germany had become strained. By opposing its official rejection of anti-Semitism to Hitler's own monstrous anti-Semitism, the Soviet government sought sympathy among liberals and even conservatives in the democratic nations of the West. This was the Popular Front period announced by the Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1935. Maxim Litvinov mounted the platform at the League of Nations to make eloquent pleas for humanitarianism and peace. Russia, in other words, turned its best face westward, and the leadership took pains to scrub it clean of any taint of anti-Semitism.

Internal developments, however, were decisive. In the mid-1930's, the Soviet regime passed through a real crisis. It faced the alternative of, on the one hand, relaxing its dictatorial rule and gradually developing certain democratic forms of government and social organization, or, on the other hand, of consolidating the dictatorship by stabilizing the new social foundations of its power and building a fully totalitarian system purged of the vague libertarian, democratic traditions of the early days of the revolution.

The regime vacillated in its attitude; only in 1937 was the die cast in favor of totalitarianism. However, as long as the decision was not yet made irrevocably, the prospect of a democratic future remained more than an illusion. In 1936 the new Soviet constitution was promulgated, promising universal suffrage, the secret ballot, and the popular election of legislative representatives at all levels. Anti-Semitism was bound to fade in this optimistic atmosphere of political expansion, and vigorous denunciations of it were in line with the "democratic" mood displayed by the

*A number of references to anti-Semitic incidents in 1934 and 1935 have been collected from Soviet Yiddish-language publications by Jacob Lestchinsky, *Dos Sovetishe Yidntum*, New York, p. 263.

Soviet leadership. Speaking on the draft of the new Constitution at the Eighth Soviet Congress in November 1936, Molotov contrasted Stalin's unequivocal attack on anti-Semitism (in a speech the latter had made in 1931) with the "cannibalism" of the Nazis, and expatiated on his own "attitude to the Jewish question":

"Whatever may be said by present day cannibals from the ranks of fascist anti-Semites, our fraternal feeling towards the Jewish people is determined by the fact that it gave birth to the genius who created the ideas of the Communist liberation of mankind, Karl Marx, who gained scientific domination over the supreme achievements of German culture as well as of the culture of other peoples; that the Jewish people along with the most fully developed nations produced a great number of outstanding men of science, technology, and art; that it gave many heroes to the revolutionary struggle against the oppressors of the working people; and that in our country it brought and continues to bring to the fore more and more excellent, most talented leaders and organizers in all spheres of constructive and defense work for the cause of socialism. All this determines our attitude to anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic bestiality wherever they may arise." (*Pravda*, November 30, 1936.)

IV

THE firmness displayed in Molotov's speech did not last long. Not long after it was delivered the Stalinist regime made its final decision to abandon democratic aspirations, and it instituted an intensified reign of terror. The first step was a purge of the party that surpassed all precedent in range and ferocity.

Paralleling the totalitarian purge, a new anti-Semitic current appeared, very different in its manifestations from that of the latter 1920's. It was less violent and less explosive but more tenacious, reflecting a trend in the various bureaucratic groups toward the elimination of Jews from influential positions and the reduction of their proportion in occupations to be reserved for the elite. Post-purge anti-Semitism was neither reported nor publicly censured. Within the framework of official statements and announcements it simply did not exist. But to the extent that personnel data on the Soviet elite can be made available, the cold and silent squeezing-out of

Jews becomes clearly evident in many areas of Soviet life.

A characteristic example of such indirect evidence of the existence of an anti-Jewish policy is an analysis of the elections to the Supreme Soviet held in the annexed Eastern Polish provinces on March 4, 1940. Among the 43 members elected to the Union Soviet and the 12 to the Soviet of Nationalities, there were Ukrainians, White Russians, Poles, but not a single Jew—either from Bialystok or Grodno, Lvov or Pinsk (*Pravda*, March 30, 1940). In Lvov, whose population was thirty per cent Jewish, only two Jews were elected to the local Soviet of one hundred and sixty members. "Moscow seems to take the attitude that in East Galicia the Ukrainians alone should have political influence, and therefore Jews are not admitted to leading positions even when they are Communist party members" (*JTA News*, February 25, 1940).

The purge of 1936-38 made the Jews a particularly easy target for attack and social ostracism. In the first place, it was aimed against that section of the generation of active Communists which had personified the internationalist tradition of the party. Internationalism, as advocated by the "oppositionists," was branded as the disguise of traitors and spies in the employ of foreign military intelligence. Nationalistic trends, which previously had been censured as "great-power chauvinism," now seemed vindicated. Primitive Russian nationalism spread rapidly, infiltrating the Communist party and the upper crust of Soviet society generally. Since the outstanding and most widely publicized personalities denounced at the Moscow trials had been Jews—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek—treason to the fatherland became associated with the names of Jewish leaders.

Also liquidated in the great purge, though with far less publicity, was an entire generation of Jewish leaders particularly concerned with Jewish affairs. Among these we should mention Dimanshtein, formerly Commissar for Jewish Affairs, later chairman of OZET; Liberger, executive committee chairman of the Provincial Soviet of the Jewish Autonomous Province in Birobidjan; Khavkin, secretary of the Birobidjan Provincial Committee of the CPSU; Litvakov, editor of *Emes* (died in jail); former Bund leaders who had joined the Communist party in the early

1920's, Rakhmiel Vainshtein and Ester Frumkin; Chemerisskii, Merezhin, Lipets-Petrovsky, and a score of others. (An extensive list of names was compiled, from data published in the Soviet press, by G. Aronson, *Jewish Daily Forward*, January 8, 1938.) In the course of the purge heavy blows hit the entire structure of the Jewish communal and cultural organizations and practically terminated the organizational existence of the Jewish group as a recognized cultural and ethnic minority.

THESE developments provide the preliminary setting for the widespread mass anti-Semitism that seemed to infect every phase of Soviet society during World War II. Inevitably the Hitler-Stalin pact placed an official *imprimatur* on subterranean anti-Jewish feeling. The pact implied not only peace with Germany but also the toning-down of the ideological fight against Hitlerism. This in turn caused Soviet authorities to keep quiet about Nazi atrocities and particularly about the increased persecution of Jews in Germany and elsewhere. Not content with a position of neutrality toward Hitlerite ideology, the regime also made known its marked disapproval of aggressive denunciation of Nazism. In his speech to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on October 31, 1939 (printed in *Pravda* for November 1, 1939) Molotov asserted that "to wage a war such as the war for 'the annihilation of Hitlerism,' is not only senseless but also criminal." By its tacit toleration and non-criticism of the increasing abominations of the Nazis (Hitlerism, said Molotov in the same address, was "a matter of taste"), the Soviet government made Nazi anti-Semitism appear inconsequential and rendered anti-Semitic inclinations morally tolerable.

ONE tragic consequence of this policy was that, when the Germans broke the non-aggression pact and invaded Russia, the Soviet Jews were left completely unprepared for the Nazi extermination program. In a report addressed from White Russia to the representative of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Areas attached to the Supreme Command of the German Army, a Nazi occupation official wrote in July 1941: "The Jews are strikingly ill-informed about our attitude towards them and about how the

Jews are treated in Germany or even in Warsaw, which to them after all is not too remote a place. If they were not, it would be superfluous for them to ask whether we in Germany have different treatment for Jews and other citizens. Although they do not expect to be granted equal rights with the Russians under the German administration, they do believe that we will leave them alone if they diligently apply themselves to their work." (From the collection of German documents in the YIVO archives, New York.)

There has been an attempt by Soviet writers, particularly Ilya Ehrenburg, to create the impression that masses of Jews were rescued by their non-Jewish neighbors in the German-occupied areas of the USSR. In his preface to *Merder fun Felker* (2nd collection, Moscow 1945), Ehrenburg cited "the facts which prove Soviet solidarity, the strength of the fraternity of peoples, which expressed themselves in the efforts of many Russians, White Russians, Poles, Ukrainians to rescue Jews from slaughter." Despite his great pains to assemble such instances, he records a total of ten incidents in which a total of twenty-four Jews was rescued, including two episodes where the help given to Jews seemed to have been not altogether disinterested.

The number of rescues of Jews by Soviet non-Jews was quite small. Vasily Grossman, well-known Soviet writer and war correspondent, who visited the liberated Ukrainian provinces east of the Dnieper late in 1943, wrote that he had met only one Jew in the whole area. In chance encounters he was told that isolated Jews had been seen in Kharkov and Kursk; Ehrenburg told him that in Northern Ukraine he had come across a Jewish girl who had been with the partisans. "That is all," was Grossman's summation. (*Einikeit*, November 25 and December 2, 1943.)

At approximately the same time a Lieutenant Shlemin visited liberated Gomel in White Russia and failed to find a single Jew in that city or its neighboring towns (*Einikeit*, December 2, 1943). In the final analysis the number of Jews—and more specifically, of Jewish children—saved in German-occupied Soviet territories compares very unfavorably with the number of Jews rescued from Nazi persecution by non-Jews in

France, Belgium, Italy, Holland, and even Poland.

One reason for the passivity of Soviet citizens in the face of the Nazi program is to be found in the conditions of Soviet life. For decades they had been drilled to obey government orders, to keep silent in the face of violence and brute force, to suppress all spontaneous leanings that might result in bringing political suspicion upon them. Unprepared to react to the rule of force, they remained silent, inactive in the face of Nazi terror against the Jews. Even when the atrocities committed against Jews filled them with horror and revulsion, they looked on benumbed, paralyzed.

Of tremendous importance to the surviving Jews in the Nazi-occupied provinces (between 1941 and 1944) was the partisan movement, which carried on sporadic guerilla warfare against the Nazis. The Jews were presented with the choice between certain death at home or escape to the woods where there was at least a chance of survival. Among non-Jews it was as a rule only the able-bodied who went underground or joined the partisans. But Jews fled with their whole families, aged and infirm and small children as well as adults capable of bearing arms. Thus Jewish family camps came into being in the forests and special Jewish detachments were set up whose chief task it was to protect these camps. Many young Jewish combatants, however, sought to join non-Jewish partisan groups that were already operating in the field. Their experiences form a depressing chapter in the history of Soviet anti-Semitism.

One of these Jewish guerillas, Moshe Kaganovich, compiled an impressive number of first-hand accounts by Jewish partisans of their experiences with non-Jewish groups. These are contained, together with Kaganovich's analysis of them, in *Der Yidisher Ontayl in Partisaner-Bavegung fun Sovet-Rusland* (Central Historical Commission of the Partisan Federation [PAKHAKH], Rome, Italy, 1948). The overwhelming impression left by these stories is that anti-Semitism had infected many Russian partisan detachments, even where Jews fought alongside non-Jewish Russians. "In the woods," writes Kaganovich, "the Jewish partisan had to fight also against anti-Semitically biased partisans. Not for a single moment did he have a chance to forget that he was a

Jew. He was constantly reminded of it. . . ."

*There were episodes of fraternity, as when individual Russian detachments assigned food from their own stocks to the Jewish family camps, but Kaganovich mentions only four such incidents.

After three years of experience in the partisan ranks, most of the Jewish partisans in White Russia and the Ukraine became so bitter that the prospect of living in the Soviet Union came to be repugnant to them, and as soon as the Soviet government permitted "repatriation" to Poland most of them hastened to avail themselves of this opportunity to leave the country. This mass exodus is an eloquent expression of the tragic situation in which Soviet Jews find themselves today—except that most of them are not offered the opportunity of "repatriation."

IN THE non-occupied Soviet areas anti-Semitism, both of the native stripe and that fanned by Nazi propaganda, spread widely during the war, when people sought scapegoats for miseries they suffered. The government pursued a policy of inactivity and silence in the face of these developments. The large number of Polish Jews—deportees, evacuees, refugees—in the Eastern provinces became objects of suspicion and hostility. In a report submitted to the American Jewish Committee on the fate of Polish Jews in wartime Russia, Dr. Jerzy G. Gliksman, a Warsaw lawyer and an observer not given to exaggeration, who spent a number of years in the Soviet Union—in prisons, camps, and the residential centers of Polish deportees and refugees—had this to say about the anti-Semitism that Polish Jews encountered in Soviet Central Asia:

"At work, deportees met with the local population, Russian, Ukrainian, Tartar, or other, either free or also deported. They were often anti-Semitic. While working with Jews they tried to inconvenience their work, and molest them as much as they could. The comparatively poor output of the Jewish deportees—caused by physical exhaustion and lack of previous experience in physical work—was ascribed to their unwillingness for physical labor, which the local population

*A detailed account of the anti-Semitic incidents related in the partisan documents may be found in an article by this writer on the partisan movement in *Modern Review* for January-February 1949.

took as a typically Jewish characteristic. Such also was often the opinion of the managers and directors of the various enterprises where deportees were employed. The high-ranking functionaries . . . sometimes also comported themselves with undisguised unfriendliness toward the Jews, assigning them the hardest tasks.

"Even representatives of the NKVD, who are the most decisive and authoritative factor in Soviet life, were not free of anti-Semitism, favoring non-Jewish refugees while at the same time unmistakably pestering Jewish ones. (*Jewish Exiles in Soviet Russia 1939-43*, manuscript in Library of Jewish Information, American Jewish Committee.)

There is equally good documentation for anti-Semitism in the Russian Army, in the Ukraine after the war, and elsewhere in Russian life. Because in the Ukraine anti-Semitic feeling coincided with anti-Soviet sentiment, an attempt was made in the post-war period to combat both simultaneously, but also to do this silently, by gradually conditioning the local population to accept as a matter of course the presence of some Jews in high positions in the arts, the professions, industry, and the party machine. The strength of anti-Semitism, though, is indicated by the nearly complete absence of Jews in the local administrative machine.

In other parts of the Soviet Union, however, where anti-Semitism is not linked with anti-Sovietism, it is indulged by the authorities. In the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, for example, the party machine today hardly numbers any Jews among organizational leaders or ranking officials, in striking contrast to the situation in the 1920's or early 1930's. Not once in recent years has the present writer found any press references to Jewish individuals serving as provincial party committee secretaries in any one of the numerous provinces of the Russian SFSR. The Soviet diplomatic service, which once included many Jews, today does not contain a single Jew in any position of importance.

MOST clearly manifest in the postwar years is the creeping, half-heartedly disguised anti-Semitism of Soviet officialdom, which first flowered in the late 1930's and which may be labeled the "new anti-Semitism." Its aim, and it has been increasingly successful in attaining this purpose, is to relegate Jews

to the background in all important spheres of Soviet life. In general, the bureaucratic classes in non-democratic—and in some democratic—countries tend to show an aversion to minority groups, especially Jews, and to resist their admission to government service. They instinctively seek to preserve the homogeneity of the privileged caste, to prevent dissension from within, and to minimize the danger of adverse publicity and democratic interference from outside, and the more this bureaucracy is identified as the fount of political power, the more rapidly does it congeal, and the more savagely does it fight to exclude from its greener pastures those individuals and groups who are in any way "different." In Czarist Russia the exclusion of Jews from government service was traditional and almost complete. The tradition was interrupted but not completely eradicated by the revolution. In the course of the first twenty years of Soviet rule, when legal restrictions were abolished, the proportion of Jews among government officials naturally increased, although it never was as high as anti-Semites claimed it to be. And even during that period, certain branches of government service (e.g., railroads) remained closed to Jews.

To close observers of the Russian scene, then, the appearance for the first time of signs of anti-Jewish feeling in official government organs does not come as a complete surprise: it fits well into this most recent stage in the history of anti-Semitism in Russia, the stage that began in the late 30's. One claim of the Soviet government is justified: the old anti-Semitism, the anti-Semitism of the Pale, has been greatly reduced, following upon the migration of large numbers of Jews to the cities of Russia proper and their absorption into industry as workers and government as white-collar employees. This anti-Semitism, it is true, was fanned to a deadly flame by the German occupation—but it is not likely that it will again play a decisive role for the remnants of Russian Jewry. In any case, the centers of Jewish population, even before the Nazi onslaught, were no longer in the Pale: even less so today.

Neither is it likely that the type of industrial anti-Semitism that greeted the new Jewish workers in industry in the 1920's will continue to play a crucial role for the Jews. Rather, it is the bureaucratic anti-Semitism

that we have described that is most important for the Jews today—and that, conceivably, may be the most dangerous.

The particular virulence of the present purge of Jewish intellectuals—the purge of Jews from the political apparatus having been to a large extent already achieved—is apparently due to the convergence of the revived bureaucratic anti-Semitism of the late 30's with the postwar growth of Russian nationalism as a political instrument of the Soviet government. Unquestionably such specific factors as the wave of general xenophobia sweeping Russia—a xenophobia which daily becomes part of the permanent cultural atmosphere of the country rather than a passing excess—as well as the Soviet disappointment over the composition of the new Jewish state, also play an important part in the genesis of the incidents that are arousing apprehension among Jews everywhere.

But it is to the careful study of the Russian system that we must look for the social con-

text in which such political and diplomatic developments bear fruit in anti-Semitic sentiments and actions. The chief factor in that social scene is the vast Russian state bureaucracy, which in defending and advancing its own interests, internally and externally, has already succeeded in squeezing out those of its members who belong to the weakest and most susceptible ethnic group. In the nightmarish conditions which now prevail in Russia, anti-Semites in the bureaucracy, on all levels, will be able to act with greater and greater freedom against Jews. It appears likely that so long as the Soviet Union remains a closed society, paranoiacally suspicious of the outside world and preventing any renewal or revitalization of the bureaucratic apparatus by free elections or free discussion, anti-Semitism will be an inevitable component of its new order, and become a furtive though nonetheless real political weapon in the hands of the government classes as their interest dictates.